

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2005

Each month I establish, with input from the Directors, the priority issues on which management and the staff focus. This report summarizes the work that was accomplished during the month as well as other items I feel will give the Council a better understanding of what the staff and I are doing to accomplish our performance objectives.

I. Improve the efficiency and accountability of management within the organization

- Finance staff created, and distributed to internal managers and sub-regions, software to develop the FY 06-07 Overall Work Program (OWP). The software requires project proposers to create projects consistent with RC adopted outcomes.
- The FY 04-05 internal audit was completed. A draft will be provided to the Audit Committee on November 10th and a final will be presented to the Regional Council at the December meeting.
- Audits for San Gabriel Valley COG and Orange County COG are being finalized and will be presented to the Audit Committee in December.
- The first quarter progress report, using our new software, was completed and submitted to Caltrans in accordance with the due date. SCAG managers have informed us that the software has made it much easier for them to create their quarterly progress reports.
- Business Support Services. On October 17th, Diane Cunningham joined SCAG as the new Business Support Supervisor. Diane has 34 years of public sector experience in administration and operations and holds an MBA from California Lutheran University. This position was created as a result of the recent Administrative Support Study which recommended that administrative support functions be centralized under this position in a new division called Business Support Services. Business Support Services is organized as a new division in the Information Services Department. The benefits of the reorganization are expected to include streamlined and improved administrative support and productivity within SCAG; improved agenda and minute-taking processes; improved teamwork among administrative staff; improved customer service; development of administrative policies and procedures; and professional development of administrative staff.

II. Provide support to the Regional Council in providing direction and Leadership to SCAG

- On October 1st I participated in a Round Table discussion on "Rethinking Regional Governance" at the USC Public Management Research Conference, attended by the universities undertaking research in Public Administration. My session dealt with regionalism. I covered the work of SCAG in general, and our mega region work in particular.

- On October 1st I gave a presentation on the 2% Strategy and what it means to Rialto at the Chino Preserve Club House. The participants were the Council, community, and Commissioners for the city. The objective of the workshop was to start a general plan revision that incorporated the 2% principles.
- On October 6th I was invited as a speaker to the Regional Leadership Conference – “Competing in a Flat World: How the Puget Sound Region Can Succeed in an Integrated Global Economy”. I spoke about Goods Movement, logistics and the changing economic conditions of the global market place. Other panelists included Port Commissioners from Seattle and Vancouver.
- On October 10th I conducted an orientation briefing for Mayor Tim Jasper, Town of Apple Valley.
- On October 17th I met with the Agua Caliente Tribe in Palm Springs. They agreed to work with staff to flush out issues between now and December, and specifically how they might participate in a partnership in getting Maglev out to Palm Springs.
- On October 18th I gave a presentation on the Elasticity Study before the LA Chamber Transportation Committee.
- On October 24th I and Hasan Ikhata met with Councilmember Wendy Greuel and her staff regarding including Compass into the work of the LA City Transportation Committee and the formation status of the Maglev Joint Powers Agency.

III. SCAG Operations

- Recruitment. The Director of Intergovernmental Relations interviews are scheduled for November 30, 2005. A selection is anticipated in December. Several other recruitments are underway.
- Professional Pathways/Training. Scope of work training was provided to all project managers, managers, and sub-regions in October. Several recommendations came out of the training for facilitating more efficient contract management. The recommendations will be presented to the Directors on November 8th.

Preventing harassment/discrimination training will be provided to all Directors and Managers on November 9th.

Speech Communication training for employees who have English as a second language is on-going in November and December for twelve employees.

- Classification/Compensation. The classification/compensation study for the planner series will be presented to the Directors in November.

IV. Implement Adopted Regional Plans

- Goods Movement. SCAG staff continues to pursue opportunities to brief public and private sector decision makers on our current work. The paper “Goods Movement in Southern California: The Challenge, The Opportunity, and The Solution” summarizes our proposed program of voluntary private sector participation in funding of projects that will speed freight through the region while also

alleviating public health impacts related to diesel fuel usage in moving goods. Staff presented the findings of the Port and Modal Elasticity Study to the Transportation & Communications Committee. The report will be discussed in a joint Regional Council-policy committee workshop on November 3rd. A key finding of this study is that the container traffic through our ports is more sensitive to congestion than the cost of shipping. A container fee of up to \$190-200 per forty-foot equivalent unit (FEU) will not result in significant diversion of containers from our ports if the revenue from this fee is invested in a wisely planned set of improvements to our goods movement system.

Since the presentation of this material at the August 24th Goods Movement Executive Stakeholder Roundtable Meeting, staff and SCAG consultants have been meeting with additional private sector groups, including CalTrade, Chambers of Commerce, and other shipper organizations. One-on-one briefings of lawmakers and key business leaders also continue. In general, our work is being very well received. In addition, we have prepared a paper for the regional transportation CEOs on the need for new institutional arrangements to assure timely implementation of high-cost multi-county projects.

The California Business, Transportation & Housing Agency and the California Environmental Protection Agency continue their joint work on a state Goods Movement Action Plan. A final Phase I report was released in September. Phase II will be guided by a series of working groups; I have been asked to co-chair the working group on Community and Workforce Development.

V. Develop Additional Planning Efforts

- RTP Update. Staff is continuing to assess the implications of SAFETEA-LU on our current RTP Update efforts. Over the past month, staff has been talking to other Metropolitan Planning Organizations, transportation agencies as well as umbrella organizations such as National Associations of Regional Councils (NARC) across the nation to get a sense of how others are gearing up to comply with the new requirements of SAFETEA-LU. The federal agencies responsible for implementing SAFETEA-LU are still in the process of rule-making and developing appropriate guidance, which could take anywhere from one to two years. Over the next month staff will consult with the federal representatives and continue to clarify the new regulations so that staff can present a recommendation relative to our RTP update approach to the Transportation and Communications Committee towards the end of this year or the early part of next year.
- Maglev. Staff is working with project managers from City of LA, City of Ontario and SANBAG to refine the Detailed Work Plan for the Alternatives Analysis of the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) based on comments from the Federal Rail Administration. Also, staff has met with IBI Group to discuss the public involvement strategy to be pursued with stakeholders along the IOS as part of Phase 2 led by Lockheed Martin. Lastly, staff has begun efforts to develop a conceptual design for an integrated Maglev/Aviation system that links airports throughout the region, thereby reducing the need to make major costly improvements at LAX.

- Regional Economy. The 9th Annual Regional Economic Forecast Conference will be held on Thursday, January 26, 2006 at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia. This year's conference will take its major theme from SCAG's 2005 State of the Region report, which will be published earlier this year so that it may be linked to the Economic Conference. Planning for the Conference is underway and a Regional Council member is being selected from among several volunteers to work with the Planning Group.

VI. Data & Planning Methods

- Initiation of a Data Advisory Committee. Staff conducted the initial meeting of the Data Advisory Committee to coordinate the acquisition of data/information required by the program staff. The focus of this committee will be to assist the Data & Monitoring staff develop an overall plan for data acquisition. The group will provide input on sources of data and information specific to the needs of the planning divisions. Other roles will be developed including the coordination of planning activities and relevant data, future data needs and input on the development of data and GIS application to assist in the planning activities of staff.
- Travel Model Improvement. The new set of travel simulation models, developed from year 2000 data with consultant assistance, were adjusted to conform to Federal Transit Administration requirements for major capital investment projects. The models are now being calibrated and validated to year 2003 observed data from throughout the region that includes vehicle ground counts from nearly 2,100 locations as well as ridership counts for 60 bus system operators, the four urban rail lines, and the seven commuter rail lines. These checks and associated refinements will insure that the models will replicate existing travel patterns and represent future travel behavior for planning analyses and studies.

In other developments, the new travel simulation models are being developed on the TransCad software platform for personal computers. This move from the TranPlan software platform on workstations will facilitate use of the models by member agencies and their consultants for future transportation studies. Another project now underway is the Heavy Duty Truck Improvement Project that will refine this important component of the SCAG travel models. The project includes an extensive survey on the travel patterns of 1,100 trucks from trucking firms throughout the region and will contribute to improved analysis of goods movement and related air quality considerations.

Performance Assessment and Monitoring

- 2005 State of the Commute Survey. Staff recently initiated the 2005 State of the Commute Survey with consultant assistance. This is the tenth survey in the region on commuting and the first one since 1999. The purpose of the survey is to develop information about commuters' travel behavior, attitude and associated factors for the purpose of trend assessment. The State of the Commute Survey will include 3,000 samples through telephone interviews in the region. Results of the survey are expected in Spring 2006 that would provide inputs into the RTP and RTIP processes.

VII. Legislative Program

Implement the Legislative Program

- Federal Appropriations. On October 20th, the Senate passed the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Transportation Appropriations bill (HR 3058) and sent it on its way for a conference with the House of Representatives. In comparison to House funding levels, overall spending was higher in the Senate by about \$2 billion or 4 percent more than Fiscal Year 2005 levels. Furthermore, the Senate did not lower transportation spending as a budget offset for Hurricane Katrina as had been expected.

However, these spending cuts are not off the table and could arise during the conference committee between the Senate and the House. Several proposals have been offered by both chambers of Congress to achieve the budget cuts needed to account for emergency relief packages passed for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. At this point, everything, including transportation funding, is vulnerable to budget cuts. I am working with our partners at the county transportation commissions to convey to Congress the serious, negative impact spending cuts could have on Southern California's transportation system, which bears a disproportionate burden for the nation's movement of freight. SCAG's federal representatives, the C2 Group, are strongly advocating our position on Capitol Hill.

- GoCalifornia. While the Legislature is in recess, the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency has been conducting workshops across the state on its 2005-06 GoCalifornia legislative package. SCAG staff participated in a workshop on October 25th in Orange County and provided feedback on the bills' elements and regional implementation strategies.

SCAG will assist the Governor as he refines the overall scope and magnitude of GoCalifornia to reach consensus on major strategies and priority projects statewide. Design-build, a key component of GoCalifornia, is critically needed to expedite project delivery in Southern California. The Regional Council supported SB 371 (Torlakson) in 2005, which would have permitted the use of design-build in highway construction. Another GoCalifornia component, public/private partnerships, has been advocated by SCAG for years. The Regional Council supported AB 850 (Canciamilla) as well, and we continue on a legislative basis to push for the passage of both measures.